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RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 2710
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 6577
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SUBJECT: SOUTH AMERICA ESTH NEWS, NUMBER 112

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1. The following is part of a series of newsletters, published by the Brasilia Regional Environmental Hub, covering environment, science and technology, and health news in South America. The information below was gathered from news sources from across the region, and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Hub office or our constituent posts. Addressees who would like to receive a user-friendly email version of this newsletter should contact Larissa Stoner at stonerla@state.gov. The e-mail version also contains a calendar of upcoming ESTH events in the region.
NOTE: THE NEWSLETTER IS NOW ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE BRASILIA INTRANET PAGE, BY CLICKING ON THE 'HUB' LINK.

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----- Agriculture -----

13. Climate Threat to Brazil's Soya Exports

AUG. 10 2008 - Brazil's soya exports could slump by more than a quarter over the next 12 years as a result of climate change, according to a study to be presented at an agribusiness conference in Sao Paulo. The study will add to concern over worsening food shortages around the world. It shows that even moderate rises in temperatures would cause significant damage to a range of agricultural products in Brazil, which has emerged over the past decade as one of the world's biggest suppliers of food crops. By

2020, the study says, the value of six of Brazil's food crops - rice, coffee, beans, manioc, maize and soya - could fall by between 6.5bn reais (\$4bn) and 7.1bn reais if average temperatures rose by between 1°C and 2°C. The most serious damage would be to soya. The amount of land suitable for soya cultivation would fall by more than 21 per cent under the best-case scenario, which assumes that action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and by almost 24 per cent if emissions continue at present rates.

Source - Financial Times

14. Argentina: Soy - High Profits Now, Hell to Pay Later

JUL. 29, 2008- At a time when the price of soy, Argentina's main export crop, has reached record highs on the international markets, family agriculture experts and environmental groups are warning about its severe social and environmental effects. Covering 16.6 million hectares, more than half of the country's cultivated land, soybeans command prices of around 600 dollars a ton and are expanding at the expense of maize, wheat, citrus fruits and cattle ranching, among other farming activities. This expansion is likely to continue after the recent repeal of the controversial hike in export taxes on soy adopted by the government in March. "Soy is an example of the 'boom and bust' model, much like fishing, mining or intensive logging," said Jorge Cappato, of the Fundacion Proteger. "An ecosystem is pressured beyond its limits, to generate enormous profits in the short term, at the cost of renewable natural resources."

Source - IPS News

----- Water Issues -----

15. Chile Starts Effort to Protect Watersheds

JULY 2008 - Watershed protection, one of Chilean President Michelle Bachelet's chief campaign promises to environmental advocates, has officially gotten underway with three pilot projects. The projects are being conducted on the Copiaps River in the north, the Rapel River in the country's center and the Baker River in southern Patagonia. Ana Lya Uriarte, Chile's environment minister, said recently that the pilot projects will seek to "analyze the behavior of the water, install a public-private planning model and involve in a sustainable way all activities around these resources." Uriarte

added that the Baker River, the proposed site for a controversial hydroelectric project, lies "in an area of our country with particularly special ecosystem characteristics, a large quantity of virgin zones, and important tourism development". At the national level, the new strategy calls for the creation of an inter-ministerial Watershed Ministry Council to propose watershed-management policies that "will reconcile diverse interests". To assist the council, the government is creating a technical secretariat to be managed jointly by Chile's Water Agency and the National Environment Commission (Conama). The new strategy also contemplates the creation of local bodies charged with drafting and implementing watershed-management plans. These public-private Watershed Organizations would include water users, government officials, green activists and other relevant stakeholders.

Source - EcoAmericas

----- Forests -----

16. Amazon Rainforest Threatened by new Oil and Gas Exploration

AUG. 13, 2008 - Vast swathes of the western Amazon - including Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Colombia - are to be opened up for oil and gas exploration, putting some of the planet's most pristine and biodiverse forests at risk, conservationists have warned. A survey of land earmarked for exploration by energy companies revealed a steep rise in recent years, to around 180 zones, which together cover an area of 688,000 sq km, almost equivalent to the size of Texas. Detailed mapping of the region

shows the majority of planned oil and gas projects, which are operated by at least 35 multinational companies, are in the most species-rich areas of the Amazon for mammals, birds and amphibians. Researchers used government information on land that has been leased to state or multinational energy companies over the past four years to create oil and gas exploration maps for western Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia. The maps showed that in Peru and Ecuador, regions designated for oil and gas projects already cover more than two thirds of the Amazon in their countries. Of 64 oil and gas regions that cover 72% of the Peruvian Amazon, all but eight were approved since 2003. Major increases in activity are expected in Bolivia and western Brazil.
Source - Guardian

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17. Brazil: INPE Releases Numbers of Amazon Deforestation for 2007-2008

Brazil's Space Research Institute (INPE) revealed that, according to its real-time deforestation detection system (DETER), 8,147 square kilometers of Amazon rainforest were deforested between August 2007 and July 2008. According to INPE, these numbers do not correspond to the annual rate of deforestation, which is calculated by PRODES, a more detailed system which only considers deforestation in its final stage (i.e. clear-cutting).
For more information please refer to

18. Brazil Launches Ambitious Fund for Amazon Forest

AUG. 04, 2008 - Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva launched an international fund to finance conservation and sustainable development in the Amazon as deforestation rates rise. The fund will support forest conservation, scientific research and sustainable development projects, such as rubber tapping, forestry management, enhanced concession programs, and development of pharmaceutical drugs from rainforest plants. The government hopes to raise US\$1 billion within one year and as much as US\$21 billion by 2021, according to Brazil's National Development Bank (BNDES), which will manage the fund. It is open to companies, countries and nongovernmental organizations. In September, Norway will make the first donation -- US\$100 million -- said Eduardo Bandeira de Mello, head of Environment and Social Responsibilities at BNDES.
Source - Planet Ark <http://www.planetark.org>. SEE ALSO BRASILIA 1159

19. Argentina: Forest impacts of pig-iron plant debated

JULY 2008 - Chaco, located on the border with Paraguay, ranks among Argentina's poorest provinces. The region's income comes mostly from farming and logging. That, in large part, explains why provincial authorities have leapt to the defense of a proposal by Votorial, a Brazilian company, to build a US\$200 million pig iron plant near Resistencia, Chaco's capital. Pig iron is a key ingredient in the manufacture of steel, and project proponents say the Chaco plant will generate jobs by helping to supply steel mills not only in Argentina, but eventually also in Brazil and southeast Asia. Conservationists contend that the project would accelerate deforestation as trees are extracted from native woodlands to produce charcoal that is used to make the pig iron. Citing the

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project's environmental-impact study, they point out that the Votorial facility would consume 90,000 tons of charcoal annually for the first three or four years, then double that amount as production rises. Chaco already produces approximately 220,000 tons of charcoal annually, the provincial government says. The new plant, which would be the first of its kind in Argentina, also would draw wood for charcoal from forests in Formosa and Santiago del Estero provinces.

Source - EcoAmericas (please contact Larissa Stoner for complete article)

110. Brazil President Signs Decrees Toughening Environmental Enforcement in Amazon

JULY 23, 2008 - Brazil's president signed two new decrees Tuesday aimed at cracking down on illegal deforestation in the Amazon. The

first decree gives inspectors the power to seize property and goods from people caught with illegally logged wood, and shortens the period during which landowners can appeal fines for environmental violations from eight years to one. The other decree provides for more agents to police the vast Amazon basin, which covers an area larger than Western Europe. The number of new agents is still to be determined. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said the measures are necessary to keep Brazilian soybeans and biofuels competitive worldwide, explaining that some consumers might boycott those goods if they feel their production is hurting the rain forest. "Not protecting the environment would hurt Brazil's competitive advantage," Silva said. "We'd be shooting ourselves in the foot." Brazil has some of the world's toughest environmental legislation. But enforcement is spotty, and environmentalists say less than 1 percent of fines levied in the Amazon were collected in 2007.
Source - International Herald Tribune

¶11. Guyana to Get US\$200,000 from Forest Carbon Partnership
JULY 25, 2008 - Guyana will receive US\$200,000 from the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) to prepare its Readiness Plan (R-Plan) for combating tropical deforestation. The R-Plan will outline among other activities, the methodologies to be used in carrying out assessments of historical and current greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation at a national level. It will also look at mechanisms to project and model future emissions from deforestation and degradation, and to update biomass field estimates across all land uses, both of which will be done at

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the national level. The World Bank named Guyana as one of 14 developing countries selected as the first states to receive money for combating tropical deforestation and climate change from an initial US\$82M partnership between those countries and nine industrialized states. The FCPF aims to reduce deforestation and forest degradation by compensating developing countries for greenhouse gas emission reductions. The 14 tropical and sub-tropical countries will receive grant support as they build their capacity to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and tap into future systems of positive incentives for REDD.
Source - Stabroeknews

¶12. Dow Chemical Gives \$1.5 Million to Preserve, Restore Brazil's Atlantic Forest
JULY 17, 2008 - The Dow Chemical Co. is collaborating with The Nature Conservancy to restore the shoreline of the Cachoeira reservoir in the Cantareira System in Brazil's Atlantic Forest. Dow's \$1.5 million pledge through its charitable foundation was announced at the company's first-ever Latin American Sustainability Forum. The reforestation will take place in a highly degraded landscape. The land's freshwater services are critical to the health and well-being of millions of people in Brazil. Goals of the reforestation project include sequestering carbon to mitigate climate change, and ultimately selling certified carbon credits to support ongoing reforestation in the Atlantic Forest. The ultimate goal is to join efforts to reforest all the degraded riparian areas and protect the existent forest remnants of the Cantareira system. The Atlantic Forest is the source of drinking water for 70 percent of Brazil's population including Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo - for more than 130 million people. The most acute risk to the survival of the Atlantic Forest's biodiversity is the very fragmented state of forest remnants and their ecological isolation from one another.
Source - Midland Daily

Protected Areas

¶13. Chile: Six New Wilderness Areas
AUG. 26, 2008 - Chile's extensive system of national parks, reserves, and natural monuments will soon boast six new additions. In 2009, wilderness areas in the Arica-Parinacota, Antofagasta,

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O'Higgins, Biobo and Los Ros regions will join the state's

National System of Protected Wilderness Areas (Snaspe). The new additions include National Park Alerce Costero (Region XIV), Natural Reserves Altos del Loa (Region II), Laguna Cahuill (Region VI), Cordillera del Pemehue (Region VIII), Cordillera del Noguen (Region VIII), and Natural Monument Quebrada Cardones (Region XV). These areas were chosen due to the presence of native plants, animals, or geological formations, said government officials. National Reserve Laguna Cahuil, for example, is home to 46 species of aquatic birds, many on the verge of extinction. The parks will focus on preservation of Chile's natural environment, and will also help grow the nation's burgeoning tourism industry.
Source - Santiago Times

¶14. Iron, Diamonds May Turn Legal to Mine in Amazon Indigenous Reserves

AUG. 21, 2008 - For decades, Valeria Paye Pereira and her tribe of Tiriyo Indians in Brazil's Para state have fought wildcat miners who slip across the northern border from Suriname and French Guiana to illegally extract gold. The miners, known as garimpeiros, have cut trees, polluted waters with mercury, cyanide and other chemicals, and attacked the tribe's wood-and-straw homes. Now, the 1,100-member tribe is taking its fight to the nation's capital to stop legislation that would allow more mining on its lands. ``The garimpeiros bring violence, disease, alcohol and prostitution,'' said Paye Pereira, 34. She has been lobbying against the measure in Brasilia. Opening up Indian territories would ``lead to exploitation, not only of the lands and the environment, but of the Indians.'' Lawmakers are debating whether to allow companies such as Cia. Vale do Rio Doce and Anglo American Plc to tap unexplored land after rising global demand caused minerals prices to surge and strained existing deposits. While supporters say doing so will curb violence and environmental damage caused by illegal mining extraction, indigenous groups say it threatens their way of life.
Source - Bloomberg

¶15. Brazil Mulls Sugar Cane Limit to Protect Wetland

AUG. 05, 2008 - Brazil would restrict sugar cane planting in one of the world's largest wetland areas if the government approves a proposal to protect the Pantanal area's ecology, according to the Environment Ministry. The agriculture ministry has been working for a year with state-run agencies on a law to restrict cane planting in

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the Pantanal, amid concern about the environmental impact of the crop's rapid expansion. No new ethanol plants, which produce biofuel for Brazil's fast-growing fleet of ethanol-powered cars and for export, will be allowed in the Pantanal's plains under the proposal, but it will permit restricted planting in the region's highlands. The proposal would require planters in this region, where cane has been cultivated for more than 10 years, to use direct, or no-till planting methods, eliminating the use of machinery and agrochemicals, the ministry's statement said. About 90 percent of Brazil's sugarcane is produced in the center-south region, which includes Pantanal.
Source - Yahoo UK

Science & Technology

¶16. Brazil Harnesses Space Technology to Monitor Deforestation

JULY 22, 2008 - Brazil will launch a satellite in 2011 to monitor deforestation and urban expansion around the world. Amaztnia-1 will carry a UK -made high resolution camera. The United Kingdom-Brazil collaboration was announced July 14 at the 60th Annual Meeting of the Brazilian Society for Progress in Science. It is part of the continuing UK -Brazil Partnership in Science and Innovation, and stems from discussions between governments and research partners that began in 2007 during the UK-Brazil Year of Cooperation on Science and Technology. Amaztnia-1 will orbit the Earth 14 times a day at a distance of 400 miles, collecting images of several countries. It will have three cameras in total, two of them made in Brazil and one made in the UK.
Source - SciDev

¶17. Argentina, Brazil to Develop Nuclear Energy Agency

AUG. 28, 2008 - Argentina and Brazil are scheduled to address the creation of a bi-national nuclear energy agency when Presidents Lula da Silva and Kirchner meet in September in Recife in northeast Brazil, reports the Brazilian press. Working together, the two-country agency could become one of the world's leading providers

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of enriched uranium. In addition to the plans by Chile, Uruguay, Peru and Venezuela to set up nuclear plants, Argentina has two in operation, is finishing a third, Atucha II, and is planning to build two more. Brazil has Angra I, Angra II, is planning Angra III and six more by 2030, revealed the Brazilian official. The creation of the Bi-national Nuclear Energy Committee (Coben) represents one of 17 agreements reached in the recent meeting by Presidents Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and Lula da Silva. However, Coben does not have the full support of the Brazilian establishment, particularly from the Brazilian Navy which for years has been working in the development of a nuclear powered submarine and allegedly is jealous of its expertise and experience.

Source - MercoPress <http://www.mercopress.com>

¶18. Chilean Government Pushes Solar Energy Incentives for Households

AUG. 27, 2008 - Chile's Finance Ministry announced proposed tax breaks as an incentive for solar water panel installation in middle to low-income new home construction. The plan also includes a fund to support renewable energy development initiatives. If approved by Chile's Congress, the proposal will grant tax breaks to partially or completely cover the installation of solar-powered water-heating systems in certain homes. Solar installation costs will be completely covered in homes valued at approximately US\$80,000 and less, while installation costs will be partially covered for homes valued up to approximately US\$180,000. Installation costs for the solar panels on each home are estimated at US\$1,340, according to the state-owned Chilean daily La Nacisn. Each solar panel system would generate over half the energy necessary to heat its household's water, reported La Nacisn. Officials said making the switch from natural gas to solar-based water-heating systems will mean monthly savings of up to US\$19 for low and middle-income families. The Finance Ministry predicts that the initiative will cost the government US\$40 million in 2009

Source - Santiago Times

¶19. Brazil's Biofuel Plane Fleet Grows

AUG. 20, 2008 - Brazilian biofuel, already available for nine out of 10 cars on the roads, is also keeping a small but growing fleet of aircraft aloft. Some 200 single-engine, single-seat Ipanema planes made by Neiva, a subsidiary of Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer, are now burning cheap ethanol made from sugarcane for their crop-dusting and public health missions. The first of the ethanol-fueled EMB

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202As took to the air in 2005, and the company has steadily increased production, with 32 turned out this year, said the head of the factory in the central west town of Botucatu. Next year, production should stabilize at 36 planes per year. The biofuel technology is only used for the propeller-driven planes, in accordance with the substantial restrictions for light aircraft.

Source - Yahoo

¶20. Brazil Wants Help from the United States in Managing Nuclear Waste

AUG. 06, 2008 - Brazil asked the United States for help managing waste from its nuclear reactors during a visit from American Deputy Secretary of Energy Jeffery Kupfer. Brazilian Mines and Energy Secretary Edson Lobao said the United States has made significant advances in the storage of residue from reactors. Kupfer's visit comes as Brazil is preparing to restart work on its third nuclear plant, Angra 3. One of the requirements for the plant's environmental license was the development of a better waste storage system. Currently, Brazil's nuclear waste is stored in a system of

"pools", long criticized by environmentalists who say the system risks spilling waste into the ocean. "The United States sees nuclear energy as an essential part of its energy supply into the future. We are in the process of constructing new reactors after a long period and the theme of waste management is an essential component of that process", Kupfer said.
Source - IHT

¶21. Biodiesel to Bring Electricity to Amazon Villages

JUL. 31, 2008 - Oil from native tucuma, ouricur and murumur palm trees will be used to provide electricity to isolated communities in the depths of the Brazilian Amazon, which are too remote to supply with power by conventional means. A research team is preparing to start producing biodiesel this year at a plant in Carauar, a district of 25,000 people that can only be reached by a 1,600-kilometre river journey, or by a two-and-a-half hour flight from Manaus, the capital of Amazonas state. Roberto Figliuolo, an expert with the National Institute for Amazon Research (INPA), told IPS that there are "10 promising palm species", which are found in "dense natural stands" and yield good quantities of oil. However, the team has worked most intensively with the tucuma palm because it is abundant and already has a partially developed production chain. The Brazilian government has for several years been implementing its

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program "Light for All", with the aim of supplying electricity to millions of Brazilians who still do not have it. In more populous areas, extending power lines was the method of choice. But in the Amazon region, an area of five million square kilometers with low population density, alternatives are being sought based on local energy production, such as solar or wind energy, or thermoelectric generation using oil from native species or wood residues.
Source - IPS News

¶22. Brazil: Petrobras Launches Biofuels Subsidiary

JULY 30, 2008 - Brazil's semi-public oil company Petrobras has launched a new subsidiary to run its growing biofuels operations, looking towards building production capacity to meet growing global demand for ethanol exports. The new subsidiary, called Petrobras Biocombustivel, will coordinate Petrobras' significant biofuels investments (US\$1.5 billion over five years) which are currently run by various units of the company. Through joint ventures with foreign investors, Petrobras plans to buy minority stakes in ethanol mills in Brazil and abroad, with an eye towards markets such as Venezuela, Japan and the U.S.
Source - RIO DE JAN 00000205

¶23. Russia and Venezuela Will Coordinate on Energy

JULY 23, 2008 - President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia declared that their countries would more closely coordinate their actions on global oil and gas markets, and work together on foreign policy issues. Russian officials stressed the business significance of the new cooperation, including three new deals to expand the presence of Russian oil and gas companies in Latin America. Russia's gas and oil giants, TNK-BP, Lukoil and Gazprom, each signed agreements in Mr. Chavez's presence to explore reserves in Venezuela's Orinoco Valley. Lukoil and TNK-BP signed agreements to conduct joint explorations with the Venezuelan state oil company, Petrosleos de Venezuela. Gazprom agreed to conduct a geological study of gas reserves in the area, and reportedly was discussing the possibility of helping to build a pipeline to Brazil.
Source - The New York Times

Climate Change

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¶24. Peru Mountain Glaciers 'Receding Rapidly'

July 29, 2008 - Climate change-induced glacier melts have cost northern Peru's mountains 26 per cent of their surface area in the last 33 years, satellite images have confirmed. The reduction is

equivalent to 188 square kilometers of the Cordillera Blanca, the highest tropical mountain chain in the world. The mountain range is home to more than seven hundred glaciers, with the glacier Huascarán declared a world heritage site by UNESCO. Marcos Zapata, head of the glaciology unit at the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA), says that the glaciers are melting by around 20 meters per year - compared to a rate of nine meters per year recorded until 1977. "At present, there are more melting glaciers and therefore there is a relative increase in flows in rivers and streams", Nelson Santillán, a researcher at the INRENA glaciology unit, told SciDev.Net. Santillán says that while the melting currently does not pose have any significant problems, people must be warned about the correlation with future reductions in water flow, water storage, and year-round water availability. INRENA estimates that reductions in water flow could occur as soon as 2020. This could have severe consequences since recent Peruvian population growth and agricultural expansion has centered on water-rich areas downstream of the glaciers Santillán says.
Source - SciDev

Sustainable Development

125. Bolivia: Businesses Take On the Green Challenge
AUG. 20, 2008 - What do Bolivia's largest textile mill, an organic cacao cooperative and an indigenous-run tourist hostel in the Amazon have in common? The answer lies in the path, shaky but inspiring, that they are all taking towards sustainable production. In the factories of the Bolivian corporation America Textil S.A. (Ametex), even the light switches invite you to "Save Energy". The company says it is committed to optimizing its production processes, reducing pollutants, saving resources and recycling inputs and materials. Based in La Paz, Ametex is Bolivia's largest textile factory. More than 3,000 workers produce 150 to 190 tons of textiles per month -- 85 percent of it for the U.S. market. All of its factories are oriented towards sustainable production, in compliance

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with the Environment Act. Source - IPS News

126. Latin America: Ingenuity at the Service of Sustainable Business
JULY 28, 2008 - Four creative sustainable development projects that have enjoyed success in Latin America received media attention in July, demonstrating a shared common denominator: the possibility of replication elsewhere in the region. The four sustainable examples are a company that will extract silver from the same contaminants it proposes to clean up; a cooperative of the formerly unemployed that will export designer clothing; small farmers planting new varieties of manioc that double the yield with fewer agro-toxins; and groups in linking agriculture in the Amazon with protection of the forest. The article goes into detail about the following four experiences: 1) Bolivia: Recovering Potos's Silver; 2) Argentina: Unemployed Come Together (Argentine Movement of Unemployed Workers (MTD) of La Matanza); 3) Venezuela: Cassava Twice Over (small farmers in the central Venezuela state of Cojedes); and 4) Brazil: Coexistence of Forest and Crops. For more information please go to
Source - IPS News

127. Implementing a Butterfly Farm: Guyana's Latest Sustainable Initiative
JULY 20, 2008 - Iwokrama, a center for rainforest conservation in the heart of Guyana's rainforest, is known worldwide for its innovative approach to preserving tropical rainforests and creating livelihoods for local communities. Their focus has been to create programs that utilize the forest sustainably, allowing for a mutual benefit between the people and the forest itself. Currently, Iwokrama has a number of initiatives under its umbrella, including eco-tourism, sustainable forestry, on-going research projects, and training programs. Amid these bustling projects, a new one has emerged: butterfly farming. Sitting on one million acres, the Iwokrama reserve is managed by the seventeen local communities within the reserve called the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB). The butterfly farm is a partner with University of Warwick, England and was provided a 333,629 pound start-up grant from the Darwin Initiative.

Source - Mongabay

NEWS FROM THE FRONT - ESTH ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AMERICA

128. Colombian Marine Environmental Workshop - (Larry Gumbiner,

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William Popp, Larry Sperling): ESTH officers from US Embassy Colombia and OES and OMC representatives from Washington, DC collaborated in the organization and implementation of US Military Southern Command-sponsored Marine Environmental Security Workshops in Cali and Cartagena in July, 2008. Workshop themes covered marine environmental security, protection, and law enforcement training with interactive participation of representatives from the Colombian navy, Colombian environmental and fisheries authorities, and NGOs. Specific topics included multilateral environmental agreements; illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; marine protected areas; marine pollution and ballast waters; CITES; and coral reef crime scene investigations.

129. Ecuadorian Conference on Sustainable Urban Mobility (Bridget Premont, Peter Martin): In July 2008, ESTH officers from US Mission to Ecuador supported the participation of United States air quality expert Catherine Witherspoon at an Ecuadorian conference (Sustainable Urban Mobility) and workshops focused on air pollution and climate change. Ecuadorian audiences and government officials in Quito and Guayaquil showed intense interest in Ms. Witherspoon's presentations on advanced air pollution controls for vehicles and fuels, health impacts of air pollution (e.g., link to heart attacks and premature mortality), bio-fuel use (ethanol and biodiesel), improvement of vehicle maintenance practices, and alternative transportation models. Additionally, her climate change presentations raised awareness on risks of increased disaster frequency; long-term reductions in water supplies; food security risks on local and global scales; impacts of deforestation on global greenhouse gas emissions; land-use decisions; and international markets for carbon trading.

130. NREL Renewable Energy Speaker Visits Chile- (Dinah Lee Arnett): Public Affairs Section Santiago hosted Strategic Speaker Doug Arent from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in a highly successful program August 11-13. Mr. Arent addressed government officials, academics, non-governmental organization representatives and other private and public sector contacts about the public policies, regulatory and investment framework necessary for the development of renewable energy technologies in Chile, a priority for Chile and the Embassy. Mr. Arent's visit received substantial media coverage and invaluable support from US Embassy Santiago's Front Office. REFTTEL BRASILIA 1172.

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131. NREL Energy Expert Continues to Argentina - (Angeles Coscolla, Sol Rubio): Following Dr. Arent's successful visit to Chile the NREL expert continued to Buenos Aires August 14 and 15. There he met with private sector experts, university students and professors, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss renewable energy and energy security. REFTTEL BRASILIA 1172.

132. Environmental Law Enforcement Experts Visit Argentina - (Angeles Coscolla): The US Embassy in Buenos Aires sponsored in July the participation of two specialists in Environmental law enforcement and inspections. The workshop organized with the Office of Environmental Control and Prevention at the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development consisted of a four day training program. The audience of national government inspectors and controllers participated in site visits, including a visit to the industrial facilities along the severely polluted Riachuelo River. The success of this training workshop proved once more the technical collaboration between the EPA and the Secretariat of Environment. NOTE: EPA experts also carried out a similar training in Chile a week after being in Argentina.

133. Peru hosts Biofuels Workshop - (Marcos Mandojana, Esteban

Sandoval): Using EEB funds, US Embassy Lima in coordination with the HUB hosted biofuels workshops in Pucallpa and Lima August 25 and 26. The workshops focused on environmental concerns, social challenges, and economic risks and opportunities of palm-oil, jatropha, and sugar cane as sources of biodiesel. Invited speakers included Timothy Killeen (Conservation International), Jos Toasa (USDA), and Miguel Valderrama (Fedepalma/Colombia palm-oil expert). The newly appointed Minister of Environment of Peru, Antonio Brack, participated in the event and spoke of Peru's environmental priorities with respect to the expanding market of biofuels.

¶34. Suriname Focuses on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trafficking - (Geneve Menscher): ESTH officer at US Embassy Paramaribo organized a campaign promoting the Harrison Ford Wildlife Trafficking Public Service Announcements (PSAs), broadcasting the PSAs thirty-eight times over three television stations in Suriname during the month of June. In launching the PSAs promoting animal trafficking awareness, the US Ambassador to Suriname hosted an exclusive lunch for official,

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private sector, and non-governmental stakeholders including the Head of Game Wardens from the Ministry of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management; the Deputy Director of Customs; representatives from the Tourism Board and industry; non-governmental organizations; veterinarians (export licensing); and the media. Suriname's nascent tourism industry and lack effective protections for endangered species put this country at great risk for supporting animal trafficking for food, animal parts, and exotic pets.

¶35. Guyana Aquaculture Partnership - (James Plasman): The U.S.-funded Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) program recently completed the first stage of an aquaculture partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and local tilapia producers in mid-August, 2008. As part of the GTIS capacity building outreach effort, University of Arizona professor Kevin Fitzsimmons visited Guyana to provide technical assistance to some 15 local tilapia farmers, integrating theory and practical advice on feeding, building ponds, maintaining water quality, and dealing with diseases. Dr. Fitzsimmons' visit follows the opening of the U.S.-sponsored Satyadeow Sawh Aquaculture Station in Guyana, a tilapia hatchery that will eventually supply 200,000 fingerlings per year to local aquaculture farmers.

¶36. Bolivia Holds Biofuels Dialogue - (Michael Stewart): As a part of a US Energy Officers dialog organized in Santa Cruz, Bolivia in August by Mission Energy officer, visiting officials held consultations with representatives from Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Guabira (a local sugar and alcohol producer), and Gravetal (a soy company). Presentations by these local companies provided grounding on local realities of biofuels project development. Tim Killeen with Conservation International, a resident scientist and expert on biofuel development in the Amazon basin, presented information on environmental implications and sustainable biofuels development concepts. All parties agreed that while Bolivia enjoys great potential for biofuel development, political obstacles and subsidized prices for hydrocarbons prevent any large scale projects from moving forward.

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